

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9850

INFO ACONSUL CALCUTTA 3448

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 1059

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BG, PK

SUBJECT: PAK-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

1. COMMENTING ON THE PRESENT STATE OF RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN, ABDUL BARI, DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR SUB-CONTINENT IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR ON FEBRUARY 27 THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF A NETWORK OF LINKS BETWEEN BANGLADESH IS PROGRESSING ON THE PATTERN DESCRIBED TO AMBASSADOR BY AMBASSADOR KHURSHID IN DACCA 0383. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THIS PIECE-MEAL, STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH ALLOWS BANGLADESH AND PAKISTAN TO TEST THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EACH NEW LINK IN THE SKEIN OF EMERGING RELATIONSHIP, BARI THEN SOUNDED A SOUR NOTE. HE SAID THAT IT IS HIS PERSONAL VIEW THAT THE PAKISTANIS NEVERTHELESS HAVE THEIR PRIORITIES WRONG. DIVISION OF ASSETS AND THE FATE OF THE BIHARIS ARE AND WILL REMAIN THE CENTRAL ITEM OF BUSINESS, HE SAID, AND ADDED THE OPINION THAT THE PAKISTANIS SHOULD BE GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT "THEY ARE AT LEAST THINKING ABOUT THESE ISSUES".

2. BARI WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD ALREADY URGED THE  
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PAKISTANIS TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF THE 12,000 BIHARIS

FOR WHOM CLEARANCE FOR MOVEMENT WAS GRANTED IN 1974 BUT WHO WERE LEFT STRANDED WHEN THE UNHCR AIRLIFT ENDED. HE SAID THAT THE PAKISTANIS HAD REPLIED THAT THERE ARE TWO IMPEDIMENTS TO THIS. FIRST, THEY (THE PAKISTANIS) HOLD IMPRESSION THAT NOT RPT NOT ALL OF THE 12,000 DESIRE TO GO. SECOND, ADEQUATE FUNDS TO MOVE THE 12,000 TO PAKISTAN HAVE TO BE FOUND. RE THE FIRST, BARI SAID THAT BANGLADESH WILL NOT RPT NOT FORCE ANY AMONG THEN 12,000 TO GO IF THEY PREFER TO REMAIN; SINCE THIS POSITION COULD REDUCE THE NUMBER OF ACTUAL TRAVELLERS CONTAINED IN THE 12,000, IT IS NOT RPT NOT MUCH OF AN ARGUMENT, SAID BARI. RE THE SECOND, BARI SAID -- AND ADDED HE WAS SPEAKING OFFICIALLY -- THAT HE HOPED THAT FRIENDS OF BANGLADESH AND PAKISTAN COULD HELP TO RAISE THE MONEY TO FINANCE THE MOVEMENT OF THE CLEARED BIHARIS.

3. RETURNING TO THE STEP-BY-STEP RESUMPTION OF LINKS, BARI NOTED THAT TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND POSTAL LINKS ARE IMMINENT. (IN FACT, THEY ARE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN TODAY, MARCH 1.) BUT, HE CONTINUED, THE PAKISTANIS ARE PROPOSING TO UNDERTAKE NOTHING WHICH FAILS TO SQUARE WITH THEIR OWN INTERESTS. HE NOTED BY WAY OF EXAMPLE THAT VISAS FOR BANGALEES TO VISIT PAKISTAN NORMALLY REQUIRE A REFERENCE TO ISLAMABAD BUT THAT THE PAKISTANI EMBASSY HERE HAD INITIALLY BEEN EMPOWERED TO GRANT VISAS ON THEIR OWN FOR COMPASSIONATE AND FAMILY REASONS. THIS POWER HAS NOW BEEN WITHDRAWN, SAID BARI, SINCE THE PAKISTANIS BEGAN TO FEAR THAT THIS TECHNIQUE MIGHT BE USED BY BIHARIS TO OBTAIN VISAS, AFTER WHICH THEY WOULD DISAPPEAR IN PAKISTAN. MEANWHILE, BANGALEES WITH REAL FAMILY PROBLEMS HAVE TO WAIT FOR VISAS.

4. IN THIS SAME, FAINTLY BITTER VEIN, BARI CITED ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE PAKISTANIS' EFFORTS TO USE THE NEW TIES WITH BANGLADESH FOR THEIR OWN ZDDS. HE STATED THAT SOON AFTER HE HAD TAKEN OVER THE SUB-CONTINENT DIRECTORATE-GENERA, THE PAKISTANIS HAD OFFERED BANGLADESH AN EXTRAORDINARILY LARGE NUMBER OF QURANS AND OTHER SACRED WORKS ON ISLAM. BARI SAID THAT THIS OFFER HAS BEEN WISELY -- AND PROMPTLY -- REJECTED. THE VIEW IN MFA HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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BEEN THAT PAKISTAN HAD MADE THE GESTURE IN AN EFFORT TO "MAKE A SPLASH" AMONG THE ISLAMIC NATIONS; BARI WONDERED HOW MUCH THOUGHT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE IMPACT THAT SUCH A GESTURE WOULD HAVE ON RELATIONS WITH INDIA. AS A STATE WHICH IS STILL AVOWEDLY SECULAR, BARI SAID, BANGLADESH DOES NOT RPT NOT WANT TO OFFER INDIA ANY REASON TO THINK ITS COMMITMENT IS ERODED; PAKISTAN'S AUGUST 15 RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH IN WHICH ISLAMABAD ERRONEOUSLY

CALLED BANGLADESH AN "ISLAMIC REPUBLIC", CREATED JUST  
TOO MUCH TROUBLE.  
BOSTER

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